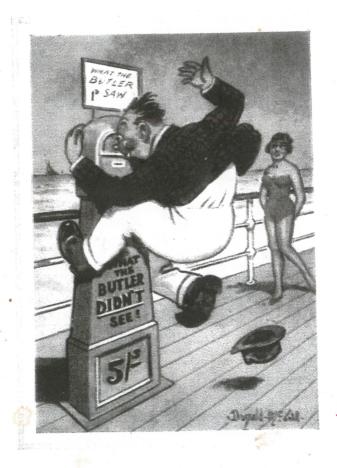
Mechanical Memories Magazine

ISSUE 32 FEB. 2009



The only UK magazine dedicated to Vintage Penny Slot Machines

Mechanical Memories Magazine

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Editorial

Hello again, and welcome to the February issue of MMM. Yes, this is the February issue, although by the time it reaches you it will be March. As I stated last month, due to other commitments, I am finding it increasingly difficult to produce the magazine, so please bear with me for the next month or so.

The situation was not helped this time by not having any articles to publish. Stuart Dale has very kindly offered to write a series of articles on restoration tips, which I am sure will be of great interest, but other than that, I have had to finish two articles I started writing months ago, which is time consuming – time, frankly, that I just don't have at the moment. I know I keep banging on about this, but I really do need more contributions.

Now, time for another caption competition! You'll see that I've omitted the original caption from the Donald McGee postcard on the front cover (which was a bit boring anyway). Come up with a new caption, and the winner will get a years free subscription to the magazine. You can be as outrageously offensive as you like, but bear in mind that if I am unable to publish your caption, you won't win!

Well that's it for now, if I don't get this to the printers, it will be April before you receive it! Hopefully the March issue should be out in the next two or three weeks.

All the best

Jerry

Classic Amusements

The only licensed dealer in vintage slot machines

Only three Bollands models left now, priced from £3000, all restored nicely

* * * * * * * *

A pair of machines:
Buckley Bones and Bally Reliance
Both in need of restoration, mainly cosmetic
as they are painted a stunning purple!

See main ad. on back cover for more machines

Please note the new website is now up and running, although it's still being worked on.

The dot com domain still works but sometimes goes nuts!

www.classicamusements.co.uk



Dates for your diary

 $\begin{array}{l} \textbf{Chicagoland Show } 3^{rd} - 5^{th} \ April \\ Illinois, \ USA \end{array}$

Brighton Jukebox Show 18th & 19th April Brighton Racecourse

Bonhams Fine Mechanical Music Sale 28th April Knightsbridge

Bonhams Mechanical Music & Collectables Sale 12th May Knowle, Nr Coventry

Great Dorset Steam Fair 2nd – 6th September Tarrant Hinton, Dorset

Bonhams Mechanical Music & Collectables Sale 29th September Knowle, Nr Coventry

Jukebox Madness 10th & 11th October Kempton Park Racecourse

Bonhams Fine Mechanical Music Sale 10th November Knightsbridge

MMM Vintage Slot Collectors' Show & Auction 29th November Coventry (provisional)

Feedback

A few days after publishing Paul Boreman's letter last month, enquiring about the **Violetta** perfume vender (I was right by the way), I received a 'phone call from a fellow collector to say that he actually owns one, which was purchased at the Nic Costa auction back in January 2006. I consulted the catalogue, and it states that the machine was produced by R Reichert of Dresden, Germany, but unfortunately no date is given.

However, a few days later, I received an email from Dave Lavender who said:

"I can confirm it was made by Jentzsch & Meerz of Leipzig, Germany in 1931 and the picture you printed is from page 49 of *Luck Dice und Henkeltopfchen* by BF Haberbosch. By turning the knob on the front you choose your preferred aroma and by inserting 10 Pfennig and pulling the pump lever on the right you get a squirt of it while checking you makeup in the little mirror."

So thanks Dave for coming up with the correct info. I guess R Reichert must have been the supplier or distributor?



You'll remember also last month, Robert Rowland's article where he recalls some of his childhood memories in the arcades at Mablethorpe. In the caption accompanying the picture of **Moonraker**, I stated that I thought it was a Cromptons machine. Michael Jordan emailed me a scan of a page from the ATE year book of 1968, which clearly shows that Moonraker was the product of ROLLITE PRODUCTS (Bridlington) Ltd. Never heard of them? No, neither have I. So if anyone has any information on this manufacturer, please let me know. I'm guessing that after the relaxing of gaming laws in 1960, there would have been a multitude of firms banging out pushers and the like, and then just disappeared into obscurity. Anyway, I've printed the scan opposite, as I thought it would be of interest.

STAND K.4

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PUSHER. Double sided multislot eight player machine. Wood grain laminate finish with ‡ plate glass top. Moulded perspex sign mounted on chrome poles.

PATHFINDER, A variation on a well proven theme. A four player, eight slot machine having seven banks per player. Designed to stand against a wall or back to back for free standing. Finished in laminate and Portafleck.

ROLLITE PRODUCTS (Bridlington) LTD.,

Clarence Drive, Filey, Yorkshire.

Branch Address:
Station Road, Bridlington, Yorkshire.

Tel.: 6474

Tel. Filey 2729

Rollite have pleasure in showing their 1967 Moonraker after a trouble-free season, also the Moonraker Mk. II.

The modified machine has moving baffles and added lighting which greatly enhances its flash and draw appeal; also we have added a new type spring playdeck which will not allow payouts when given rough treatment. This modified playdeck is now standard on all Moonraker models.

is now standard on all Moonraker models.
In addition to Moonraker I and II we are showing a Wall Moonraker which has been manufactured at the request of many arcade operators. This machine is a free standing 12-play machine giving true value for wall space occupied.

Our range of wall machines this season are brighter than ever in a new streamlined cabinet of fantastic fire flake finish with a host of colours to choose from.

The Mini Push and Eazy Win are motored machines but the Ski Jump and Fair Play machines are a mechanic's dream,

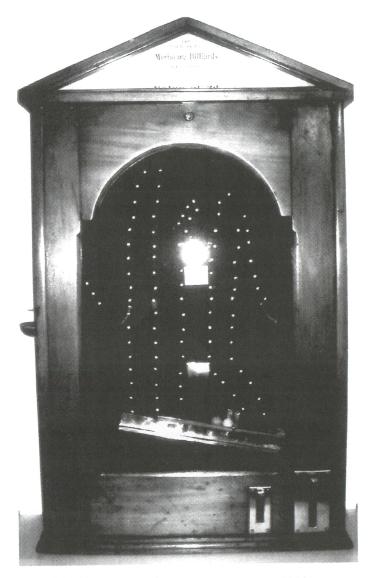
having no motor or moving parts.

We are proud to present our new Planetarium, a 10-play free standing machine in fabulous colours, futuristic design and colour-changing lighting which is truly the centre-piece of any arcade. The impact of this machine will certainly draw the crowds and mesmerize the public into playing it.

The colour range of our Mini Rider has greatly been increased and this 6d, coin slot car in sparkle finish fibre glass is robust and well worth a try on the track.

Fibre glass klosks, Clown's faces and Litter bins add to our range of products on show.

Acrylic fabrications, signs and prototype work quoted for. Your visit is not complete until you have examined our exhibits. MEMBER OF A.T.A.



Haydon & Urry Miniature Billiards, c.1900

The Perpetual Ball Tube

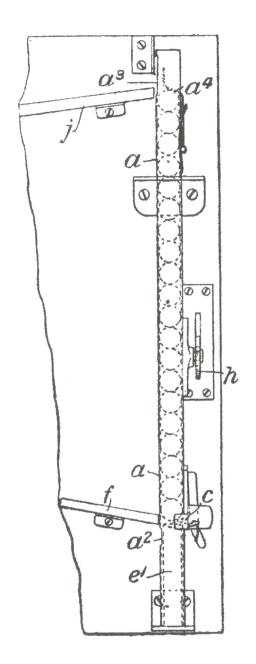
From the early bone or composite balls, to shiny chromium-steel ball bearings, the vast majority of wall machine games utilise balls as projectiles. If the aim of the game is to drop a ball from the top of the playfield, it has to get there in the first place!

The early wall machines from the 1890s employed the player's coin as a projectile, and were either drop case machines or the type broadly described as shooters. The earliest machine 'with balls' I have encountered was produced by Haydon & Urry, I would guess in the late 1890s or around the turn of the century. Called **Miniature Billiards**, it is very similar in design to the **Tivoli** drop case machines of the same era. The ball is fired to the top of the playfield in much the same way as the player's penny is fired in the Tivoli, i.e. by a spring-loaded plunger, which the player actuates with a trigger on the front of the machine.

This method of raising balls to the top of the playfield, although somewhat crude, is evident in many machines produced in the ensuing decades, particularly some of the huge variety of games manufactured by BMCo in the 1930s. It does however have one inherent drawback; it is not really suited to multi ball machines, and gives rise to two potential problems. First, where the game employs more than one ball, the balls have to be fed individually to the plunger, which necessitates an extra knob on the front of the machine. As an operator of vintage machines, I know only too well that normally sane, rational, intelligent punters suddenly turn into dribbling imbeciles when confronted with a machine with too many knobs (actually, a machine with just knob in many cases). Second, when the afore mentioned imbecile starts 'fiddling', there is always the risk, if not absolute certainty, that more than one ball will get fed to the plunger, thus resulting in balls getting jammed. Some machines were better designed than others, with some incorporating mechanisms intended to prevent more than one ball being fed at the same time; but none were idiot-proof.

There was a solution though, an ingenious method of ball delivery that is, if such a thing exists, idiot proof; a mechanism that can deliver any number of balls in a single game, and will only do so one at a time, and with only one knob. It is a mechanism that I have always admired for its sheer ingenuity, which I call the *Perpetual Ball Tube*.

The mechanism consists of a tube mounted vertically, full with balls; the number of which are extra to those in the game. Therefore, if the player has four balls to play, the machine must contain those four balls, plus all the balls in the tube. The stack of balls inside the tube is supported at the bottom by a pawl, under spring tension, which protrudes into the tube through an aperture in its side. Below the pawl is a plunger, which is free to move up and down the bottom section of the tube, activated via a crank connected to the ball feed knob on the front of the machine.



Drawing from patent No. 18643, 'Improvements in Coin-Freed Delivery Mechanism'

When the player turns the knob to bring a ball into play, the plunger pushes a 'new' ball past the pawl into the bottom of the stack. The pawl springs back as the ball passes, continuing to support the stack. The column of balls has thus been raised by one ball, which causes the ball at the top of the stack to be displaced. This ball will then be fed to the playfield, and so this process continues *perpetually*, until all the balls available to play have been used.

I had, for many years, wondered at the origins of the perpetual ball tube; who was its inventor and where did it originate? Many collectors attribute this method of ball delivery to William Bryan, and it is certainly used to good effect in machines such as **Payramid** and **Trickler**. However, over the years I have encountered several machines that considerably predate Bryans machines, so Mr Bryan was not the answer. And then, about a year ago, to my great delight (and, indeed surprise) I discovered the patent, and thus its inventor.

Do you remember my feature on Charles Ahrens in the November issue? I made reference to "...... a later patent granted in 1915 for a revolutionary ball feed device." I then went on to say "I shall discuss this patent in greater detail next month, space permitting." Well, space did not permit in the December magazine, but by now you will have guessed that it was indeed Charles Ahrens who was responsible for this remarkable method of ball delivery.

Ahrens was imprisoned for much of the duration of WWI, due to his German ancestry, and I wonder whether this may have rendered patent protection void? Certainly several wall machines using Ahrens' ball tube were produced either during or shortly after the war, and not by Ahrens. Two that come to mind are Conquerors' Flags and Victory Flag, both of which were multi ball machines manufactured by The Automatic Novelty Co. Strangely, I have never encountered any wall machines produced by Ahrens which use this ball feed device, indeed Ahrens is renowned more for large floor-standing machines. However, there could be another reason why others were apparently able to infringe Ahrens patent, as he seems to have got his own patent wrong! That is to say, he made the device more complex than it needed to be. In his patent he states:

'The articles from the incline f fall onto the fixed block e1 secured to the casing over which block the tube b is raised bodily in suitable guides b1, b2 etc., carrying with it the pivoted catch or pawl c, by means of the lever h.......'

This clearly shows that rather than raise the balls by a moveable plunger, Ahrens idea was that the column of balls should remain static, and that it was the tube that was raised and lowered. Incorporating a moveable plunger which raises the balls in a static tube has the same effect, but could easily be argued did not infringe Ahrens' patent.

I guess we will never know whether the patent was infringed, or whether Ahrens received royalties for allowing its use, but without doubt, the perpetual ball tube was a remarkable invention; a method of raising balls which endured for decades...........

Let's not forget that Jim Bryan was still producing the Payramid in the 1980s.

Restoration tips



By Stuart Dale

Renovating an Oak Cabinet.

There are many ways to renovate the oak cabinet of your prized Vintage slot machine, and in this article I hope to pass on to you the method that I like to use. This method was shown to me by an old time French polisher of many years standing, and is in keeping with the períod pieces you will be working on. You will need some Raw Linseed Oil, Beeswax Polish, Methylated Spirit and Turpentine. Don't Use Turps Substitute as it is mineral based and made from oil, whereas old fashioned turpentine is vegetable based and distilled from tree resins, which makes it much better for the wood. This is the quantity I make and use it in: Put 0.5 Litre of Methylated Spirit and 0.5 Litre of Turpentine in to a heatproof container. Please don't use the wife's best pudding bowl for this! Stand the container in a pan of water and gently heat it over a <u>low</u> light until it gets up to Body Heat approximately 37c or 98f, then turn off the heat. Please take care when doing this and never leave it unattended when heating it up. Spirits and heat don't mix well! The warm liquid can then be brushed over the oak cabinet's old finish and rubbed with a course rag, this will soften and remove the old wax and varnish from the wood, this can be very messy, change the rag as required, you can use a small stiff brush to get in to the corners and the beadwork.

Repeat this as required until all the old finish has been removed and the wood is left with a clean surface. Next work over the cabinet with Raw Linseed Oil and a clean soft rag, this will help to bring out the grain pattern in the wood. Now you need to remove any excess Linseed Oil and dust etc from the cabinet before applying the new Beeswax finish. The Beeswax should be applied evenly with a cloth and/or a brush; it will take several coats of Beeswax to build up a deep shine to set off the oak. I find it is better to use a soft shoe brush to buff up the Beeswax between coats and finish off with a duster after buffing up the final coat. I have used this method on numerous machines with very good results, but I would urge you to experiment on a scrap item until you get to grips with this old technology before you try it on your best machine. Always try to work in a well ventilated area or in the open air when using spirit based products, and above all....

Have Fun...

HEALTH & SAFETY

Please take care when working with Spirits and Naked Flames, and always ware the correct hand and eye protection equipment for your own safety...



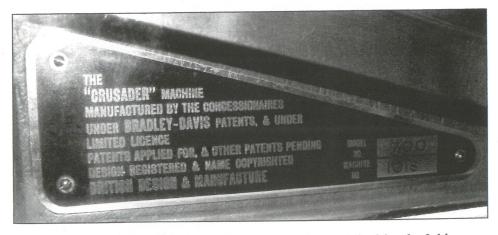
Classic Machines

Bradley Crusader

There are no doubt several reasons why the **Crusader** should be considered a classic machine, not least because it was, as far as I am aware, the first multi ball, multi payout catcher to have been produced. It should be noted that this isn't strictly speaking a catcher, as the catching medium, in the form of a folk does not so much 'catch', but rather guide or deflect. However, rather than put it in a class of its own, I think most collectors would consider Crusader to be a catcher.

Dating from the early 1930s, Crusader is attributed to Leslie Bradley, whose highly successful **Challenger** will be familiar to most collectors. However, whether or not Bradley was actually responsible for the manufacture of Crusader seems unclear, as is evidenced on the manufacturer's plate, which reads:

THE 'CRUSADER' MACHINE, MANUFACTURED BY THE CONCESSIONAIRES UNDER BRADLEY-DAVIS PATENTS, & UNDER LIMITED LICENCE PATENTS APPLIED FOR, & OTHER PATENTS PENDING DESIGN REGISTERED & NAME COPYRIGHTED BRITISH DESIGN & MANUFACTURE

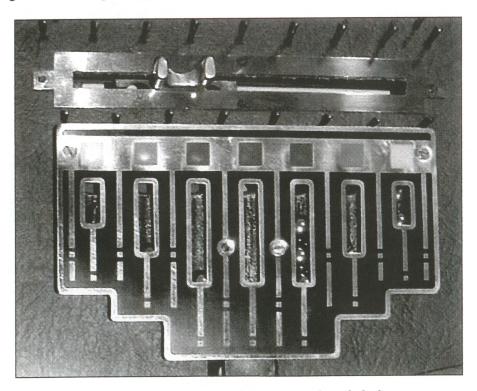


The manufacturers serial plate, located on the bottom left of the playfield.

Who or what is meant by *Concessionaires*, I've no idea. I have also drawn a blank with the implied patents. Although Bradley was granted many patents, mostly relating to coin acceptance and vending, I have been unable to find anything relating to the Crusader. It thus appears that the Crusader's origins are a mystery.

So, what of the game? At first sight, the machine appears complicated – note the dreaded three knobs! In reality, it's quite simple and fairly self-explanatory, even to the casual player. The left-hand knob moves the folk; the right-hand knob feeds the balls and located in the centre is the payout knob. The aim is to fill one or more columns with balls in order to effect a payout. As each ball falls through the pinfield, the moveable folk is used to deflect the ball into a column. When a column is fall, the last ball will drop back into the machine in order to release the payout mechanism.

The columns are arranged such that the two outermost require three balls for a payout of two pennies; the next two require four balls for a payout of four pennies and the three central columns require five balls for a six penny payout. It's interesting to note that the instruction plate at the top right of the playfield states 'replays' rather than coins when referring to payouts; clearly an attempt to detract the attention of the authorities in regard to the strict gambling laws at the time.



The seven column gallery, and moveable guide or fork above.

At this point, I should state that I have no idea how many balls should be available to play. My machine has six, but I guess operators could add or take away balls depending on how difficult they wanted to make the machine. Suffice to say, the machine needs to contain at least five balls in order to fill one of the central columns.

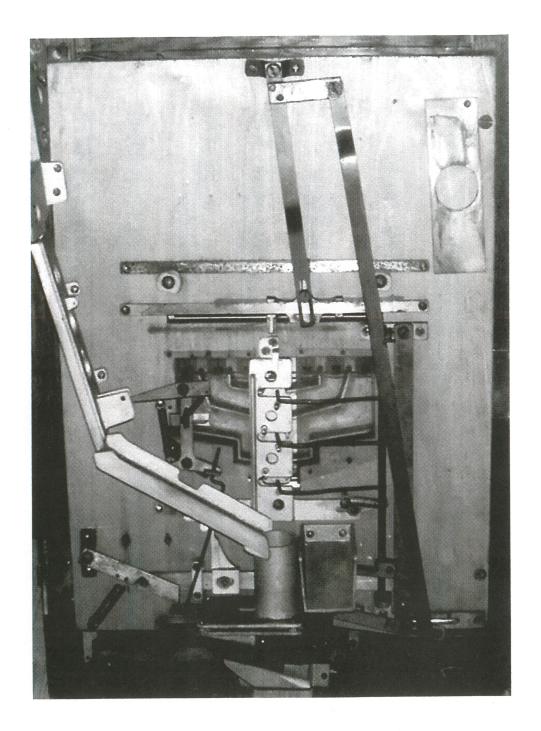
With six balls, it is possible to fill both of the outermost columns, which require three balls each for a payout. In practice though, it would be practically impossible because as the balls fall through the pinfield, statistically they are more likely to fall to the centre, and there are clearly limits to how far the balls can be deflected with the folk. Of course, the more balls the machine has available to play, the more chances the player has of obtaining more than one payout, as the permutations of possible wins are increased in ratio to the number of balls. When playing my machine, I rarely win at all, so I suppose from an operator's point of view, six balls are about right!

How it works

The mechanism is well designed and equally well made. When a penny is inserted, it trips a latch which releases the captive balls from each of the seven columns, which fall to the bottom of the playfield ready for play. The latch is reset when the ball feed knob is turned. The method of raising the balls is the *perpetual ball tube*, which is neatly positioned adjacent to the coin chute, between the playfield and the doorframe.

The payout mechanism is interesting, and works on a principle that I have not encountered on any other wall machine. In common with all allwins, the Crusader has a payout control arm, pivoted at the top and connected to the payout knob via a crank. The arm is linked to the payout slide, and thus pulls it back and forth as the knob is turned. However, this is where the similarity with allwins ends. The machine's method of detecting a winning ball is well engineered, if not a little over-complicated.

Let's first consider how a 2-4-6 payout works in a typical 1950s allwin, say Whales or Wonders. A winning ball will be directed into a vertical channel, divided into three sections or compartments: uppermost for the 6 payout; centre for the 4 and bottom for the 2. For each section there is an associated ball lever; all three pivoted on the payout control arm, but interconnected so that all three move together. Also connected to the ball levers is a latch, which prevents the control arm from moving in the absence of a winning ball (on Wonders machines, the bottom ball lever also acts as the latch). When a winning ball is present in one of the compartments, it depresses the ball lever, thus releasing the latch and allowing the control arm to move freely when the payout knob is turned. There are also two stop wires connected to the control arm, which move across between the top & centre and centre & bottom compartments in the course of a payout. These momentarily hold the ball in the case of a 6 or 4 payout, and then allow it to drop down to the next ball lever and thus allow the payout process to continue. The three ball levers; the latch and the two stop wires are the only moving components employed in the detection of a winning ball in a 2-4-6 payout allwin.

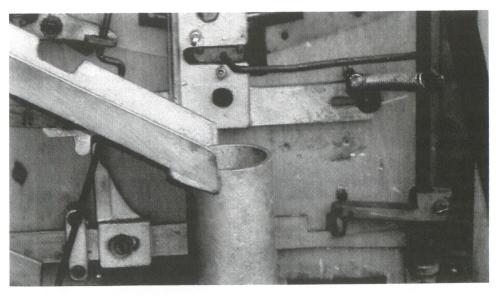


Page 18

Now let's consider the Crusader's detection mechanism. In common with allwins, a winning ball will be directed into one of three compartments, where it is held captive by a pin protruding from a moveable aluminium casting. There are no ball levers, and the only moving part attached to the control arm is a detent bar, which slides horizontally when the control arm is moved. Mounted perpendicular to the detent bar is a shaft, at the base of which is a cam that locates with a notch in the bar as the shaft rotates. In the absence of a winning ball, if the player attempts to turn the payout knob, the control arm will pull the detent bar slightly, whereby the cam (under spring pressure) will engage with the notch and thus block further movement.

If a winning ball is present in any of the three compartments, a corresponding wire detector will make contact with the ball as the shaft begins to rotate. The shaft is prevented from rotating further, due to the obstruction of the ball, which thus prevents the cam from engaging with the notch in the detent bar. The player is then enabled to turn the payout knob fully, in the course of which the detent bar moves the aluminium casting sideways, whereby (in the case of a 6 or 4 payout), the ball will drop to another pin and be held temporarily. When one turn of the payout knob is complete, the detent bar will move the casting back, and the ball will drop to the next position. At the end of the payout sequence, the ball is returned for replay.

So, that's the Crusader. Not necessarily the greatest fun game to play, at least not if you like to win, but nonetheless a fine example of 1930s British coin-op. An attractive machine, thoughtfully designed and well made. In my view, a true classic.



Above, close up view, with the coin pot overflow chute removed, of the cam attached to the vertical shaft, and the notch in the detent bar. Also in view, the bottom detector wire.

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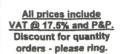
N10 Payout Knob & Sleeve £11.95

N11 Ball Hammer £4.95

N12 Ball Cups 1-5 £9,99each 6-10 £7.99each 11+ £5,99each



N14 Allwin Track inner £19.00 middle £19.00 outer £23.50 set of 3 £47.00







gallery, 6 x 1, 9/16

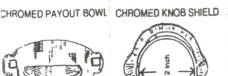
CHROMED THUMB STOP

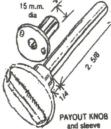


CHROMED ARROWS Reversable.

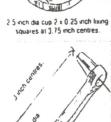
CHROMED TRIGGER FRONT 10 m.m dia







2 x tapped M5 fixing holes on extended nipples 2. 1/2 centres.



BALL

HAMMER





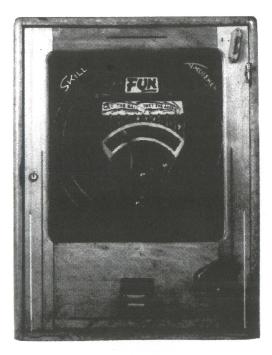
SPANDRELLS

Page 24

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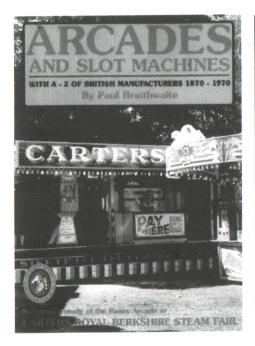
This volume captures Watling Manufacturing Company's full range from scales to bandits in catalogues, brochures, line folders, broadsides and service data, original patent and mock-up photos of the ROL-A-TOR line, artists' preparatory airbrush renderings for advertising and promotional material and Watling family photos and correspondence. Plenty of legendary anecdotes and well-informed context in the accompanying commentary. Hardback, 192 pages, b/w. **Price: £15**

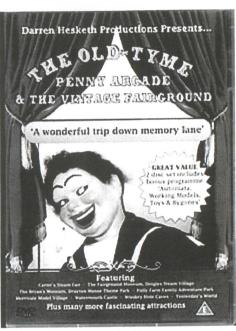
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